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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9436
INFO RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 2477
RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA PRIORITY 0168
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU PRIORITY 0150
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 4214
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7146
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5702
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1032
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 4821
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 3209
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6162
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2439
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 0793
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RUEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON MUSHARRAF'S POLITICAL SITUATION

Classified By: Charge Peter Bodde 1.5 (b), (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Frequently Asked Questions about President Musharraf's current political problems.

[1](#)2. (C) Q: Is Musharraf in as much trouble as some Western journalists indicate?

A: No, but he is not as strong politically as he was four or five months ago. 2007 is an election year in Pakistan, and the Pakistani press and Freedom of protest and assembly is relatively unhindered. The parliamentary opposition and the high courts operate robustly. As in many democra

[1](#)3. (C) Q: So what is the opposition complaining about, exactly?

A: Musharraf's "leadership crisis" (his advisors' term) has three major components:

--The people around him admit the government handled the reference against the Chief Justice badly. . . . Additionally, the government -- espec

--The May 11-14 violence in Karachi damaged Musharraf's reputation. His attempts to assign blame for the fighting on political parties other th

-- Civilian deaths in Afghanistan hurt Musharraf's standing with the more conservative sections of society and with those opinion makers who be

--While the controversy surrounding the Red Mosque and its adjoining women's seminary is a sexy story that Pakistani and Western reporters love

[1](#)4. (C) Q: Should we worry about serious reactions to the "crisis"?

A: Embassy contacts inside and outside the military do not believe a coup is likely. Indeed, it is striking how few rumblings of "possible mili

[1](#)5. (C) Q: Will Musharraf declare a state of emergency?

A: Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President Chaudhry Shujaat and National Security Advisor Tariq Aziz tell us the President has analyzed differer

[1](#)7. (S) Q: And the nuclear arsenal?

A: The arsenal is under the control of some of the most impressive officers in the Pakistan Military. No matter what civilian government might

[1](#)8. (C) Q: Should the U.S. be doing anything on the "leadership crisis?"

A: Our private (very private) comments so far have focused on a few key points, which probably bear repeating:

-- . . . President Musharraf has created a formidable legacy of a free press and strengthening civil society. The international community incre

--The decision of many Western news outlets to open bureaus in Islamabad indicates the importance the West places on Pakistan. The presence of

--A credible investigation into the May 12 violence in Karachi would seem to be in keeping with the increasing openness of Pakistani society.

--Credible elections will cement the legacy of this administration. Continued dialogue with the opposition on how to design a framework for suc

BODDE